

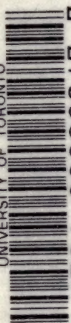
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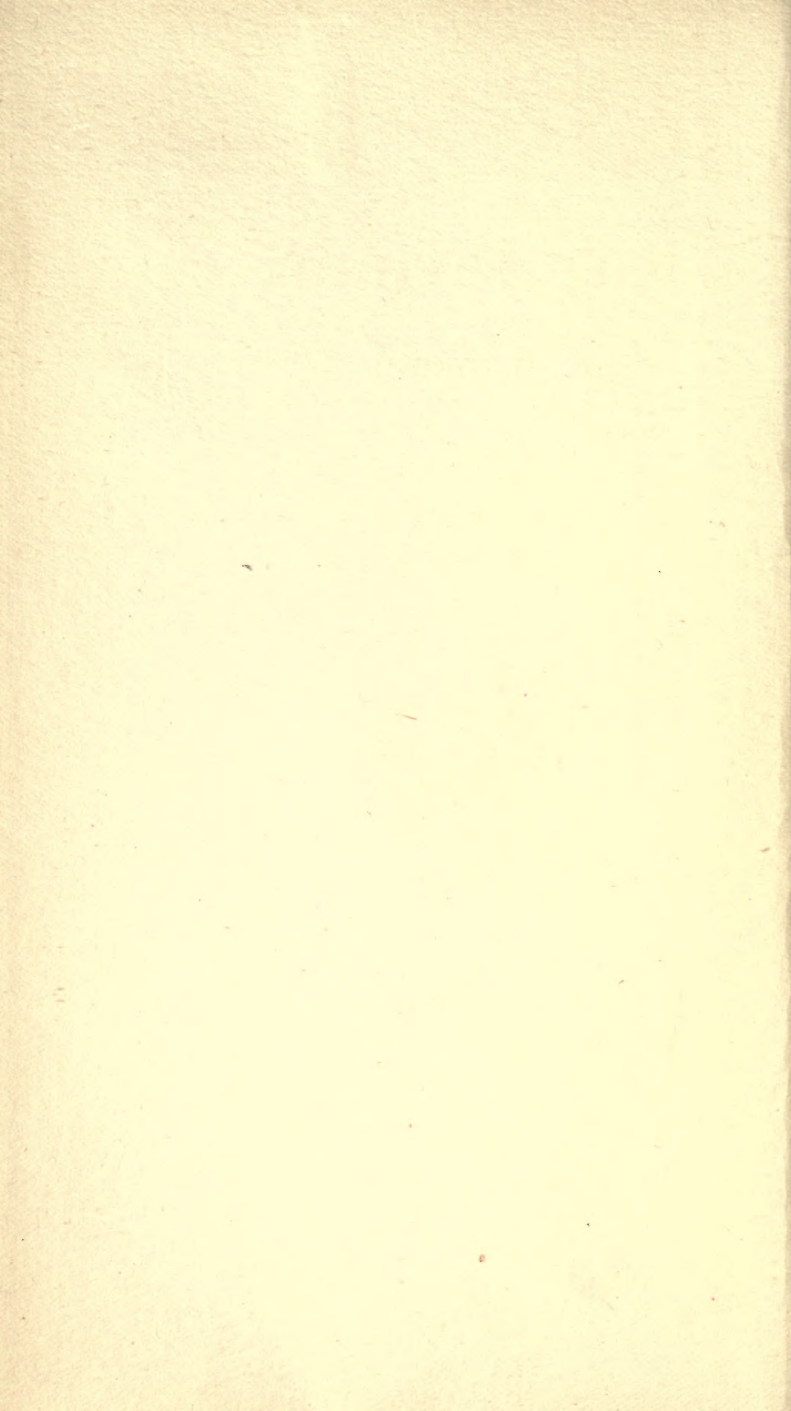
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Rus Divinum



Rus Divinum

A Poem

BY

Auguste Smada, B.A.

(Capt. W. A. Adams, 5th Lancers)



London

T. Fisher Unwin

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1900

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Dedicated,

*Like my life, to an ideal, which, if existent,
is yet unfound ; and*

Written

*for those few, those very few, who from the turmoil
and trial of the passions of this world may
wish to turn for a few moments their
weary eyes to Nature and
to Love*

FOREWORD.

WE leave disputes on origin and cause
To those who tabulate our natural laws ;
To heated lecture-rooms and o'erwrought
 brains

The praise of their discovery remains.

But we, who from the fountain-head would
 learn,

 Feeling the hand of God in every place,
Delighted, find new charms where'er we
 turn,

 And worship divine Nature face to face.
She gives us all, that is enough for us ;
 Let us not ask the reason why she gives,

Nor grudge to sophists the amusement thus

To argue—for example—that death lives,
And that life cannot die may hence be
shown,

Making th' undoubted doubtful, known
unknown.

We must draw back the curtains, raise the
blinds,

And throw our study windows open wide
To heaven's pure air ; turning our stagnant
minds

From what is stale within to what is fresh
outside.

Our library's no doubt well stocked,

The shelves with books well lined,

But let us leave the cases locked,

And see if we can't find

In Nature's workshop some things that
deserve

Our notice more ; for here our field of
view

Is only limited by the horizon's curve

Expanding ever. 'Twould but little serve

To stay man's curiosity if he knew

Or pondered every time he walked abroad,

Whether this Universe's wide expanse

Had been designed by Nature, formed by

God,

Destined by Fate, or hazard-thrown by

Chance.

Let doubts like these by others questioned

be,

But let us rather go and sit alone

By open window in some silent tower,

When feast is finished and when dance is
done.

Let us for contemplation choose this hour,
The darkest, coldest hour before the dawn,
When mankind sleeps, and all our thoughts
are drawn

To join in Nature's perfect harmony.

THE form of Night, robed in deep purple
pall,
Weary, but stately, lingers in the hall
Of her ancestral seat,
Raising from time to time her anxious head
To catch the first faint echo of the tread
Of gay Aurora's fairy feet,
When, clad in light and odours sweet,
She springs from old Tithonus' bed.
Just now her step the nearer fields have
heard,
And, roused by her caress, have waking
stirred,

While the more distant hills, as yet unkissed,
Sleep still behind the curtains of the mist.

There ! is it but a mirage of the eye ?

Halting betwixt reality and dream,

Herald of dawn, appears the first faint
gleam,

Which wanders shyly in the eastern sky :

A homeless gleam which is not light,

But only Darkness pale with fright,

When first, from unknown distance echoed
far,

She hears the faint dull rumbling of the
Sun-god's car.

Is it, or is it not, the morning breeze,

Which wakes the row of neighbouring
poplar trees,

That whisper their weird secrets all day
long,

(And even through the night their words
of love

Are sometimes heard) ?

They shuddered, as they passed the word
along ;

The leaves below, warned by the leaves
above,

Have likewise stirred ;

For Dawn has come, and the Creator cries

In slumbering Nature's ear : "Awake !
Arise !"

Now the Sun's molten globe bursts into
sight,

With shafts of fire against the zenith
hurled,

Champion, he comes to dry the tears of
Night,

That she has shed o'er an ungrateful
world.

On, like a hunter, sweeps the God of light,
The rosy hours attendant in his train,
As, chasing before him the shadows of the
night,

He bounds from rock to rock and scours
across the plain.

E'en ere the panic-stricken shades have fled,
Obedient to the summons from above,
Tear-weighted Nature lifts her grateful
head,

And throbs responsive to his touch of
love.

Waking, surprised, as the last shadows
leave,

She stares in expectation on his face,
And prone in wonderment the hills upheave
Their rounded bosoms to the God's
embrace.

The mountain-side, which in full daylight
seems

So smooth and slope, is found, when first
displayed,

Deep-crumpled into watershed and vale
And filmed with mist ; but as the last stars
pale

And vanish in the west, the eastern beams
Run rippling o'er its ribs of light and
shade.

Nature, refreshed, and just aroused from
slumber,

Shakes from the drooping lashes of her
eyes

The drops of dew, finite in form and size,
But infinite in colour and in number.

See! the cliffs washed in dew and not yet
dried,

Fronting the east on the sheer mountain-
side,

Glisten like crystal in the morning blaze,

Offering to Aurora's gaze,

As her glance upon them falls,

Mirrors to adorn the walls

Of her spacious tiring-chamber,

Where, doffing her first dainty gown of
rose,

She dons a seamless robe, which stately
flows

Down to her feet in folds of glowing
amber.

Caught by the reflected rays,
She a moment breathless stays,
And, as she her beauty views,
Stoops to loose her beaded shoes ;
Then displaying further charms
Slowly rears her shapely arms,
Which inwards gracefully incline
To unloose the tangled twine
Of the flowing yellow hair
Which enshrouds her dimpled
shoulders,

Gold and white reflected there

In the mirror of the boulders.
Combing out the clustering masses
From her dressing-room she passes ;
And as Aurora fades from view,

Her magic mirrors vanish too,
Leaving but a cliff steep, bare, brown and
dried,
Deserted on the lonely mountain side.

Now the lark, springing from her nest,
Shakes the bright dewdrop from her
speckled breast,
As upwards to the heavens borne along
Higher and higher she holds her sightless
way,
Pouring the sweet incense of her morning
song
Into the hanging brazier of the day.

Our foot starts from his form the timid
hare,
And following with the eye his zigzag flight

Until behind the hedge he's lost to sight,
Far in the distance, pillowed high, one sees
The manor chimney just above the trees,
Its plume of white smoke nodding on the
air.

As further stray
Our eyes in admiration, far up there
High in the heavens do the sunbeams
show
A hawk which flying leans upon the air
And from his liquid platform peers below,
Seeking his prey,
Which, warned in time by the dark shadow,
cowers
In grotto formed of tangled grass and
flowers ;

The while its would-be captor wings his
way,

Foiled, silent, through the broad expanse of
day,

Till at last he's lost to view
In the all-devouring blue.

Our path is fringed with buttercup and
daisy,

The poor man's gold and silver currency,
While in th' embroidered carpet at our feet
We find the light-dispensing meadow-sweet,

With the clover, red and white,

And the poppies flaming bright,

Every gay flower, that the country yields
To deck her lanes and glorify her fields,
Ramps on the air to catch the morning
breeze,

Which stoops not lower than the taller
trees,

Where with a deft and playful touch she
weaves

Her woof of sound amid the whispering
leaves.

Live while ye may, ye glad, bright flowers,
For when the wanton summer's gone,
Your colours shall fade, though your beauty
Shall still in memory linger on.

For the sunlight is only diurnal,
The stars can shine only by night,
But Beauty alone is eternal,
And Beauty alone has the right
To boast that all things human and divine
Offer their constant homage at her shrine ;

God formed the earth according to her plan,
For Beauty is God's heirloom unto man.

Now wandering where the little river rolls
 Its waters seaward round the green hill's
 base,
We'll sit awhile upon the rustic fence
And pass the time in fertile indolence ;
Talking alone with the departed souls
 Of kindly genii who haunt the place.

As we descend to reach the spot, we find
 The shimmer of the rushes at our feet,
 Which, with playful hiss
And little heedful of the wooing wind,
 Lean, each his own particular way, to
 meet
 His partner's loving kiss.

An unused, narrow path, descending, tortuous, leads

To where is thrown,

A ribbon loosely floating on the flowery meads,

Its bank o'ergrown

With stooping grasses and with feathered reeds,

The sand-lipped stream, which hides the speckled trout,

Winding his cautious way now in, now out,

Seemingly careless, but on prey intent

Within the tangled garden of his element.

The cream-hued lily, floating on the tide,

Her polished emerald tables spread beside

Her silver cup, whose diamonds invite

The turquoise-bodied dragon-fly t' alight,

And, basking in the radiance of her smile,
To rest his wings of gossamer awhile.
Emblem in miniature of the opening day,
To whom all other flowers incense bring,
She holds her chalice white to catch the
spray
That yonder coot shakes from his ruffled
wing.
Ah ! vain, dissatisfied coquette,
Thy gauze-winged lover dreads the
wet ;
A prey to jealousy or fright,
He leaves thee with unequal flight,
While the grey coot, whose love you
wooed,
Floats down the stream with wife and
brood,
Leaving thy marble tables wet

And in thy heart the fond regret
That thy first lover was dismissed,
Before proceeding to enlist
On thy behalf the sympathy
Of one who represents, as he,
Respectable paternity.

While sitting thus, inclined to moralise,
A tangled skein of tiny butterflies,
All yellow-winged and frail, has come to
play
Beside us here. Each limply gropes his
way
Through the maze of an unknown world
a day
Failing to solve its mystery, then dies.

Hark ! heralded by their own peculiar cries,
Like scampering children from a school-
house freed,

Along the bank a flock of small birds flits,
Of blue and yellow, bobbing, chattering tits.

The bristling rushes now their flight im-
pede,

And, seizing coign of vantage, each one sits
Peering at life from th' eyrie of a reed.

These form the crowd, the aristocracy
The black and silver swifts ; which darting
by

From stream to bank, from bank to ether,
fly,

And ever forming trackless hoop and loop
Dance their mad war-dance, circling whirl
on whirl,

Threading a maze self-woven. Now they
hurl

Themselves aloft, then just as sharply
stoop

To dip once more their glossy wings, whose
gleam

Returns from the smooth surface of the
stream.

The flowering fields are warm with Nature's
breath,

The drowsy grasses simmer underneath

The midday sun, while we refreshed inhale

The meadow-perfume wafted on the gale.

Resting their noses on each others' necks,
No movement seen but that of waving tails,

Which, slow but ceaseless, like work-wearied
flails,

Harass the oft-returning flies, which vex
Their coloured hides, some cows, perhaps a
score,

Stand underneath that spreading sycamore.
Some brush the lower branches with their
horns,

While others straying seek among the thorns
Which fringe the upper edges of the
stream

Ways undiscovered. Halted thus, they
seem

A master-painter's canvas slightly blurred
By the sun-vapours dancing from the land,
Which, bathed in sunlight, intervenes. They
stand,

Each one a picture, a gallery the herd.

Afar, upon the rock-strewn upland grass,
Where the cloud-shadows, as if half-
asleep,
Linger so fondly, being loath to pass,
Just through the opening in the hills are
seen,
Above yon coppice spread, the browsing
sheep,
Like daisy spots upon the closer green.

The winding path (guarded by rows of limes
And spreading beech), by which the shepherd
climbs
At night to tend his flock, though brown and
soiled
And worn, is like a leash uncoiled,
Which links with unresisting strain
The haughty heights and humbler plain,

A type of sympathy, by which
The poor are linked unto the rich,
The high unto the low, until indeed
We find the basis of a Christian creed,
Which truth and mercy yet may blend
 To make life happy here,
Finding in every flower a friend,
 In every man a peer.

To all men let us preach the Christian faith,
 Which brings us comfort and forbids us
 weep ;
Perhaps we've looked on Sleep and thought
 it Death,
By faith we look on Death and know 'tis
 Sleep.
Lord, give us faith, which Thou alone canst
 give ;

Without that gift our works must cease to
live ;

And Nature shows alone to faithful eyes
The panorama of her mysteries.

'Tis sad to seek for life and find but death
In what the great ones of the past have
said

And grandly faithless sung ; for without
faith

The poetry of life must be but dead,
Pale, cold and beautiful, as marble stone
Standing to memorate life's brief day done,
As still eternally and void of breath
As he who sleeps within the grave beneath.

Thus pondering in my youth, how many
hours

Have I dreamed through upon the smooth,
green sward

Of an old, and now far distant, churchyard,
Hallowed by memory, garden of the Lord,
Whence at the last He'll cull the choicest
flowers,

Where the tall elms their leafy branches
spread

To hold each other in a fond embrace,
And, forming thus an arbour o'er my head,
Gave their warm shadows to the hallowed
place !

How sad to visit such familiar spot
In after years, and find our name forgot
Except by some old tree, which bears it
still,

Faithful among the faithless, carved in years

Long past, at sight of which our sad
 hearts fill
 With bitter thoughts, our burning eyes with
 tears.

For the present is the time alone
 We can dare to call our own,
 And this too, like fleeting sand,
 Is fast falling from our hand.
 Why do we all in darkness grope,
 And see things only as they seem ?
 The Future's but a yearning and a hope,
 The Past is but a mem'ry and a dream.
 By thought alone we wave a puny wand,
 Imaginary symbol of our power,
 Over their misty non-existent, realm ;
 And thus we fondly feed the present
 hour

With vain conceit that we can stretch a
hand
To steer our barque of life, and by the
helm
We hold attain the port of power.

Descending towards the river-bed, we stand
Where the wary water-hen
Late has formed a linked chain
By her light footmark on the sallow sand,
And, pausing, view the rippling eddies steal
Across the current, showing where the
bream
Or lazy perch, lipping his midday meal
Fresh served upon the bosom of the stream,
Is lurking. As the tell-tale bubbles glide,
Each after each, from the embowered
shade

By bending reeds and sweeping brambles
made,

Some are soon caught and sink upon the
tide

To death ; while others, streaked with many
a hue,

Drift on the bosom of the stream from
view,

Till sweeping o'er the tiny waterfall,

Which throws its myriad opals into space

Over the moving cloth of white foam
spread

To catch its falling burden, one and all

Are lost within its passionate embrace,

And, leaping to the shallower rocky bed,

Are dashed to pieces but to rise again

From the ripples by which they have been
slain.

For as Vigour is born of Decay,
And Peace is the child of Strife,
So Night is the heir of Day,
And Death is the seed of Life.
The silvery bubbles, as they die,
Are emblems of humanity,
For we, poor things, what better are we
than
A bubble born a moment and then
whirled
Into extinction? Aye, what else is man
But a bubble on the surface of the world?

The briar-rose, whose life is one short
blush,
Whose folds so frail the entering bee
would seem
Beneath its very weight about to crush,

Bows her fair head beneath the summer
blast

And weeps her petals on the flowing
stream,

Each one the spectre of a perfumed past.

The cooing of the water as it smoothes the
pebble,

Pitched 'mid the bee's deep base and lark's
high treble,

Forms with them such a glee,

That e'en the frivolous butterfly is fain

In ecstasy to listen to the strain

Of perfect harmony,

And, rainbow-tinted, pause to fling

A kiss to her own image in the wave.

Alas ! poor hoverer, she dips her fragile
wing,

And 'mid the joy of life has found a grave
Where she sought love ; her flood-engulfèd
sails

With ever feebler stroke she flaps, and
tries

To soar again. As her last effort fails,
She ruthlessly is swept away, and dies.

The sun to whom she trusted, and who
dried

Her feathery wings, as earnest of his
power,

When rising wet with dewy shower
From her bath in morning flower,
Now cannot save her from the flowing tide.
Poor foolish flutterer ! too late you learn
The lesson which experience might have
taught,

That drops, though harmless scattered, yet
 may turn,
Collected, to a stream with death and
 danger fraught.

Ah ! many-coloured butterfly,
That seems but to be born to die !
Could we too pale with the sunlight
 And perish along with the flowers,
And fade when the perfume faded,
 A happier lot were ours.
Why should we flap our wings and strive,
Being bound to die, to remain alive ?
'Twere better the waves should close over
 head,
And bear us out among the jostling dead
To the broad ocean of eternal peace,
Whence we rise not again, and all ills cease,

Or else where, drifted to the heavenly shore,
We, reawakened, live for evermore.

Is death but a cessation of all pain ?
Or is it sleep in which we dream again ?
Such is the problem we are set, evolved
By life, by reason, and at last resolved

By death, a grim solution we can share
With no one ; for the Divine voice is mute
And science leads us to depths deeper still

Of doubt, despondency, at last despair.

When friends are faithless, and advice is nil,
We stand like a lone tree wistful on the
hill,

Whose shadow at midday was seated at its
root,

But which, as the sun's departing rays begin
Westward to lean, has truant crept away

Adown the hillside, till it's lost within

The shadow of the hill whereon it lay.

Thus, as the fortune of our day descends,

Those who before were glad to be our

friends

Steal from us without warning one by one,

Until we find ourselves at set of sun

Standing unfriended, like the tree alone,

Without a shadow it can call its own.

When will man's baser nature wish to

climb

To higher thoughts and to behold at will,

Fit emblem of eternity and time,

The fleeting shadow on th' eternal hill ?

Inviting us to stroll upon the beach

And read the lessons Nature there can

teach,

A winding path lies through the flowery
heath,

Across yon moss-grown stile, and then
beneath

The silent shadow of the fragrant pines ;
So thick their branches that the sun ne'er
shines

Beneath, so high their stature that they
find

Their crests alone are shaken by the wind,
Their slender trunks untouched by passing
storms.

We notice that the gaunt trees' shadowy
forms

Which, as we moved, moved with us and
around,

Though with a footstep which gave forth no
sound,

Pause when we pause, enchanted and
enchained,

And, startled, listening seem, as if they
strained

Their ear to catch our footfall when
resumed.

Standing amid such spectral dead entombed,
The wandering, wondering echo of our
breath

Intensifies the feeling of encircling death

As from the ghostlike silence we emerge

Upon the intervening sandy dune,

Sudden there greets us the familiar tune,

Rising and falling, of the ocean surge,

Which drones through a long summer after-
noon ;

And as we stride across the belt
Of sand which parts us from the sea,
The wind, like God, unseen though felt,
Is tingling with divinity.

Refreshed, we turn our step and slowly
climb

Yon cliff, seared by the iron hand of time,
Above storm-racked, wave-fretted at the
base,

From whence we find before our vision
spread

The mirror of the ocean, in whose face
Th' Almighty God sees Himself reflected.

All the while our brow is gently fanned
By the light wind, which hovers coyly by
And traces quaint cloud patterns on the
sky,

That throw a shadow-patchwork on the
sand.

Some fleecy clouds await a favouring gale
To waft them onward under well-filled sail,
And, like a scattered fleet, are riding high
At anchor on the bosom of the sky.

Out towards the offing, where the waves are
seen

To take a deeper shade of emerald green,
A tiny, cliff-bound, coral island looms
Above the rocks, weed-grown and tanned,
Like some proud mausoleum among tombs,
Resting in a green graveyard on the land.

While further in the offing still one sees
The white-winged boats that curtsy to the
breeze,

And seem to glide along the swelling tops
Of wave succeeding wave, whose ruffled
rest

Will later rudely waken on the shore
In churning foam and sand ; but now their
crest,

Blue and unbroken, thinks of nothing
more

Than by its breathing to reflect the drops
Of sunlight falling on its azure breast——
A Picture, by the hand of God impressed,
Whose vivid colours glow upon the sheet
Of water, where the Sun-god in his heat,
Panting and amorous, demanding more
And more from his beloved, has laid his
store

Of rifled beauties at fair Nature's feet.

'Tis as if all he had to give he gave,

And wishing then the picture to complete
And having no more, he himself then
came,
To throw his diamonds upon the sapphire
wave,
And set the jewelled mass in golden
frame.

Across the billowed sand the scent of brine
Comes, and while gazing on the distant
view,
Where heaven and horizon meet together,
We lose our wandering thoughts in doubt-
ing whether
The sky be sea, or sea be sky ; so blue
They are we scarce can mark the boundary
line.

Reflecting every jewelled splendour,
When by the Sun-god kissed,
Amber, onyx, jasper, sapphire,
Emerald and amethyst ;

Changeful as the love of women,
Limitless, fathomless sea,
When wilt thou restore thy dead ?
When reveal thy mystery ?

To those who cannot read thy ceaseless wail
Of swirling waters thou dost tell no tale.

Thou barren sea, though watered by the
rain

Of women's sad tears, falling drop by drop
Through countless ages, thou return'st no
grain,

Though ploughed and furrowed, thou dost
yield no crop.

List ! from the fitful roaring of thy waves
apart,

Distinct though distant, speaking to the
heart,

There comes a dull and still unfinished
moan :

Thou answer'st not, mysterious sea ; ah !
yes,

To me, e'en though unwillingly, confess
That sound the dead's accumulated groan.

As thoughtfully returning hence
We skirt the forest boundary fence,
The restless wind begins to stir,
The sun-fed shower's harbinger,
And thirsting leaves, wind-chidden and
dismayed,

Whisper each other sympathetic aid.

Mark too the gathering clouds which form
The shadow of the coming storm.
Sudden it comes and quickly passes,
Leaving its tears upon the grasses,
Ghostlike across the memory-haunted down
Trailing the rustle of its silken gown.

And now the golden butterfly of sun
Is bursting from its chrysalis of cloud,
And in the sparkling leaves which have
begun
Their chattering talk, as if with life
endowed,
In streams which chasing one another
run,
Nature does more than smile ; she laughs
aloud.

In the slope sunbeams it is raining still
Upon the distant upland wold,
Where seen against the background of the
hill

There pours a showered dust of gold
Glad not their opportunity to miss,
The feathered songsters issue forth to sip
The sudden rain, which has with parting
kiss

Left moisture upon Nature's sunny lip,
Binding with tenderness the wounds that
were

Agape upon the superficial crust
Of thirsty earth, while the cool evening air
Is fragrant with the odour of wet dust.

Nature refreshed refreshes us. But mark !
E'en as we speak the rainbow's varied arc,

Th' Almighty's palette edge, from whence
are drawn

The tints to paint the sunset and the dawn,
Leaps into life, the pledge of promise given
Long since to man on earth by God in
heaven.

Whence comest thou? And whither dost
thou go?

Perfect in form, space-spanning, opal bow,
From which the arrows of the sunbeams
spring

In clouds of colour, when thy twangless
string

Is loosed by God. What is thy mission
here?

Why dost thou curve thy neck, and archly
rear

Thy haughty head defiant to the sun,
Like some proud beauty wooed and yet
unwon ?

Tell us, thou fleeting rainbow, why so proud?
Thou mirage painted on a vaporous cloud,
We heard no sound to herald thee, or swell
The echo of thy printless feet, that fell
On rooted rock and shifting tide yet bear
Thy zenith pinned against the liquid air.

Although three elements thou madest
As one a moment by thy kiss,
Like all things beautiful thou fadest
Into a colourless abyss.

E'en as we look upon thee, thou art gone,
And our eyes, cheated, only gaze upon
The busy midge that dances by,
Wee speck against the evening sky.

Poor tiny mite, that's born to live
A moment in the smile of the sunbeam

And then to die,

Tell me, why did Nature give
Me reason to foresee as in a dream

That also I

Must, when the evening shadows come,
Be hopeless laid within the tomb ?
You in your ignorance can happy be,
But, taught, this blessing is denied to me.

The scarp-line of the distant range,
Now ragged, was in ages prime
Carved by the careful hand of God,
Since rough-hewed by the scythe of time.
Thither trends the glowing sun,
His diurnal journey run,

To cool his passion 'neath the jagged crest
Of pine-clad ridges beetling to the west.
Stately he goes, as well becomes the great,
A dream of colour, voluptuous, passionate.
His reign is o'er ; his life-blood's ebbing
fast ;

Behold him proud, imperial to the last,
His purple robe sweeping in fold on fold,
Gold-crowned and treading on a cloth of
gold.

And see those red-tipped cloudlets floating
nigh,

That strew the path o'er which he lately
trod,

Emblems perhaps of regal cruelty,

Ghastly footmarks flecked with colour
Is't blood ?

Cruel he may have been ; but now he's
dying ;

God hath sent forth the fiat of his doom ;
Uncertain, as if loath to go and yearning
For better things, he halts a moment, turning
One last long backward look to where is
lying

His morning cradle in the eastern gloom.
As on the ridge he stays his lingering foot,
Perhaps, like dying man, he halts to put
The question to himself : What have I
done ?

Of all my early dreams is there not one
Come true ? Is there no shadow where my
faith

Was placed that's turned to substance ?
What in death

Remains to me of all in life I prized ?

A promise unfulfilled, a hope unrealised.

The sun has disappeared : and Nature stops

Breathless, expectant, while th' Almighty
leans

Forward His arm across the hills, and
gleans

The harvest of the sun-beams on their tops.

The rainbowed sunset, late so bright,

Has swooned into the arms of night,

And pales, like some fond lover's kiss,

Melting into forgetfulness.

Now wearied Nature rests, to slumber lulled

By faint-heard breeze's crooning lullaby.

The sky of the rich afterglow is wreathed

With wraiths of wind-cloud, where the Lord
has breathed,

And with His warm breath for a moment
dulled

The surface of the mirror of the sky.

'Tis as if God the sunset wished to paint,
But wearying of the mighty work, and faint
With watching, on the canvas He'd let fall
His careless brush, which smudged the
work ; and all

His labour was in vain. So in despair
Of ever being able to repair
The harm, He brushed the canvas clear of
light,
And swept th' unfinished picture into night.

We bow our head close to the dying face
In reverence to catch day's fleeting breath,
Ere the roses of life have yielded place
To the purple violets of death.

Everywhere emotions mingle,
As the Night does with the Day,
No feeling of the heart is single—
The dismal mixes with the gay.

Complex emotions are far sweeter
Than if single they would be,
Love itself is made completer
By the touch of jealousy.

Hatred too involves regard,
Greatest when it's most intense,
And to bear is not so hard
As colourless indifference.

So it is that in the gloaming
We feel what words cannot express,
And twilight evenings hold a charm
That neither days nor nights possess.

While we drink deep the pleasure of sad
thoughts, and gaze
From dreamland on the earth-born mildew-
haze
Which wreathes its clammy arms around the
bier
Whereon the dead day lies, we see appear
The stars, the throbbing pulses of the
sky,
Which have since the creation from their
high
Watch-towers been gazing down on us,
exalted,
Hung from the roof of God's own temple-
vaulted
Home, illumining with their living light
The dead, dark void of Chaos and of
Night :

Innumerable gems set in the azure brooch
Which clasps the robe of mystery round the
frame

Of Night, which Day at his approach
Unfastens, and o'ercome with shame
Night blushing scapes from treatment
rude

To hide in western hollow,
And still pursuing, still pursued,
Night flees and Day doth follow.

But now she's thrown the dice and won the
day ;

Her rival's dead and powerless to stay
Her course, whose influence man and beast
obey ;

And so, star-decked for conquest, all-sub-
duing Night,

Scenting from far her victory as won,
Shakes the reins loose across her black-
winged team,
Who—nostrils snorting, flanks obscured by
steam—
Rear upwards, as if seized by sudden fright,
And champing at their bits plunge madly
on.

The stars present themselves, a glittering
crown
Gem-studded, to the Goddess of the night,
Who, robed in sequin-spangled purple
gown,
Binds at her waist a milky zone star-
white.
Now, holding converse through space
myriad-miled,

Flashing their messages from countless
eyes,
The stars have joined unanimous and smiled
To see the Queen of heaven prepare to rise.

Flashless with expectation now they wait,
As in a theatre one sees a crowd,
Who whispering stop and e'en their breath-
ing bate,
As they look expectant
For a promised débutante,
Like whom the moon an instant will
Coquetting pause, and wait until
A second time her cue be given
To glide upon the stage of heaven
From behind the curtain of the cloud,
Whose edge is crimped and fringed with
silver light.

Of figure full for the first time to-night

The fair ripe moon, whose orb full-turned
Wrestles impatient with its vaporous
shroud,

Deep panting to display her maiden charms,
Succeeds at last, and stretching forth her
arms

Of light unto the world for which she
yearned,
Bursts from the prison of the envious cloud.

To earth she throws the carpet of her light,
With here and there a rug of shade
By masses of thick foliage made,
And, resting her fair orb upon the night,
She breasts the waves of darkness; and like
swan

On mountain tarn, she rides serenely on.

Now all the world is sleeping peacefully,
Except that large white phantom moth we
 see,
 Which steers her halting course along the
 light
And shadow to the sleeping churchyard
 bent,
Where flitting o'er the tombs, like some fair
 penitent,
She'll raise her prayers to God for those
 who die to-night.

'Tis in an hour such as this
That Memory brings to us our book
Of life, that we may once more look
On spectral days of sorrow and of bliss.
We turn the pages with a holy dread,
And doubting call to life a past long dead,

Seeing again the once familiar faces,
Discovering in their lineaments the traces,
Before unnoticed, of bitter grief and care
Suppressed through life. Some of the pages
there

Are soiled by evil thoughts, and others worn
And thumb-marked, where we've changed
by practice

A habit to a virtue or a vice.

Many again are deeply scarred and torn
By passion ; few are fair. As we let
Our eyes run through the chapters stained
and wet

With bitter tears, we often pause aghast
To read therein the lessons of our past.

But we must go : we must resume to-morrow
Our life of outward joy, of inward sorrow ;

And in the crowd and cruel world must
move

Once more, where faiths and fancies find no
place ;

For we, like sun and moon, have too our
race

To run ; we have but one day trod
Paths rarely taken, looking on the face
Of Nature's greatest poet, God,
Reading His greatest poem, Love.

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12

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